

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: June 14, 2018

Agenda Item: Moose, Sheep and Goat Quotas Outside Biennial Quota Ranges

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Min

Background:

The Commission previously adopted quota ranges for moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat for each hunting district within which FWP can make changes that do not need Commission approval, but changes outside the adopted ranges do need Commission approval. FWP is proposing one such change for moose and none for sheep and goats. Detailed information on the proposal is found in the proposal justification in the commission packet.

- FWP proposes to increase the moose 334-50 antlered-bull licenses in the Red Rock-Odell area from 5 to 6 and to change the adopted quota range from 1-5 to 1-10. The objective is to provide additional moose harvest opportunity that survey data indicates is sustainable and increase future harvest management flexibility. Since a low of about 20 in the mid-1960s, the observed wintering population has shown periodic fluctuation but a general long-term positive trend to an all-time high of 161 wintering moose in 2017. There was a noticeable drop in recruitment starting about the time the population consistently exceeded 100 observed wintering moose in the mid-1990s, about 10 years prior to wolf establishment and 20 years prior to grizzly bear establishment in the area, suggesting some other limiting factor such as competition, forest succession, or other.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Feedback was solicited through the Sheridan area wildlife biologist's interested persons email list of approximately 120 hunters, non-hunters, FWP enforcement staff, sportsmen's and NGO group representatives, landowners, county commissioners, and state representatives on April 2, 2018, and through the Centennial Valley Association's April newsletter. No comment had been received by May 5. The proposal was also directly vetted with the Red Rocks National Wildlife Refuge Manager, Bill West, who supported the recommendation. He agrees that the increased harvest of antlered bull moose is sustainable but would like to see incremental increases in harvest opportunity so that possible hunter-crowding on the refuge can be monitored and proactively managed.

Alternatives and Analysis

No alternatives were considered.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the commission adopt the proposed changes to the 334-50 moose licenses.

Proposed Motion

I move that the commission adopt the changes to the 334-50 moose licenses as proposed by FWP, and that all other aspects of the 2017 moose, sheep and goat regulations remain unchanged except for regular calendar rotation.